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ABSTRACT

This symposium on human resource development (HRD) theory consists of three presentations. "The Real Debate: Who Does HRD Serve?" (Wendy E.A. Ruona) finds three distinctive sets of beliefs about who/what HRD serves, namely that HRD serves individuals, organizations, and multiple stakeholders. "Theorizing HRD" (Jim McGoldrick, Jim Stewart, Sandra Watson) attempts to derive a conceptual "map" of HRD in the United Kingdom and does not present a particular position on HRD. "HRD as a Factor in the Inevitable Move to Globalization" (Gary N. McLean), an opinion piece, explores the implications for HRD of globalization. Concluding that globalization is inevitable, the paper makes recommendations for HRD's role, with emphasis on integrity in the process. All three papers include substantial bibliographies. Two of the papers include substantial bibliographies. (YLB)

2001 AHRD Conference

HRD Theory

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Symposium 15

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The Real Debate: Who Does Human Resource Development Serve?

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The findings of a recent qualitative study raises the possibility that the question driving the on-going debate of performance vs. learning is actually the wrong question, and, furthermore, that the fragmentation of the profession into these "camps" simply does not depict true and important differences separating various approaches to HRD. We must begin to engage in philosophical activity in HRD to elucidate issues central to deeply understanding the field and the important differences in it.

Keywords: Philosophy of HRD, Purpose of HRD, Qualitative

The debate about the purpose of human resource development (HRD) has raged in our literature during the last 10 years. The answers that have emerged thus far have been presented as two "camps", each advocating its own aim—one argues that HRD is for the ultimate purpose of improving performance (Swanson, 1995) while the other argues that HRD is for the purpose of learning (Watkins and Marsick, 1995). The focus has been on the perceived dualism between these two goals, and the issue has taken center-stage at international conferences, dominated entire monographs, and is debated in numerous articles.

The findings of a recent qualitative study (Ruona, 2000, 1999) raises the possibility that the question driving this on-going debate is actually the wrong question to be asking, and, furthermore, that the fragmentation of the profession into the performance vs. learning "camps" simply does not depict true and important differences separating various approaches to HRD. One certainly intuitively suspects that there are emerging paradigms in HRD—each approaching the practice and theory of HRD with their own set of underlying assumptions, values, and core beliefs about its purpose and aims, values, and practices. However, we should not be too quick to assume that the two emerging paradigms are performance vs. learning, or that there are only two paradigms!

Instead, we must begin to ask different questions that will elucidate issues central to deeply understanding HRD and the important differences in the field. Philosophy, at its core, is disciplined reflection, and it is the activity that best enables us to do that. While philosophical activity in HRD has thus far been rather limited, with notable exceptions (Barrie and Pace, 1998; Kuchinke, 2000; Marsick, 1991; Watkins, 1991), it must be rigorously pursued to gain clarity about the assumptions that are driving practice and knowledge building in HRD, and to stimulate dialogue about critical issues facing the field.

Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to share the strongest theme that emerged from a larger study. To provide some background, the purpose of the study was to explore beliefs underlying the profession of HRD. In order to do this, the inquiry explored assumptions and beliefs of scholarly leaders in the field. Specific objectives were to:

1. Explore core beliefs underlying participant's ideas of excellencies to be produced by the profession;
2. Analyze the findings to identify common and divergent beliefs across participants of this study.

The findings presented here represent only one part of the study's findings which were quite extensive. The focus reported is limited to the issue of who HRD serves which was a naturally emerging theme from that qualitative data.

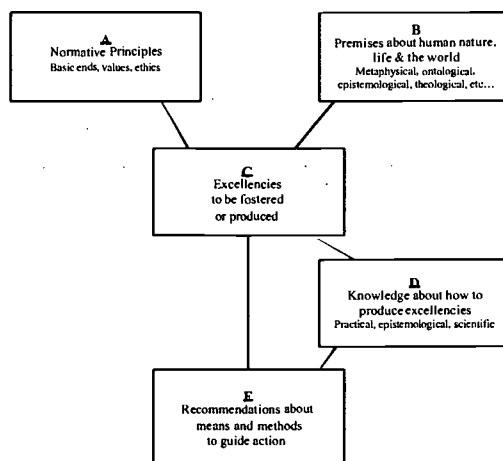
Organizing Framework Underlying Original Study

The organizer for this study, "If the profession of HRD was excellent in all ways, what five-seven things would be true?", was the guiding question posed to all participants. It originates from an interpretation of Frankena's (1965) framework for analyzing a philosophy, and Magee's (1971) revision of that framework (see Figure 1). The

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framework is based on the discipline of logic, and forwards the proposition that practical precepts about what should be done must be supported by a line of reasoning that justifies those conclusions. Therefore, he states, that any normative philosophy has two parts:

Figure 1. Organizing Framework for the Original Study.



(1) a comparatively philosophical and theoretical line of questioning involving A, B, and C, to show what excellencies are to be cultivated..., and (2) a comparatively empirical or scientific and practical line of reasoning, involving C again and D and E, to show how and when they are to be cultivated. The conclusions of the first part become the premises of the second part. (p. 9)

Although this framework has been used only in the philosophy of education, it is believed to be a potentially valuable framework to help analyze and map beliefs in the profession of HRD. This study is an effort only to begin that journey by asking HRD scholarly leaders to surface their ideas of excellencies to be produced, and probe those for core beliefs driving them.

Methodology

This was an exploratory and descriptive study, using qualitative methods. Initial in-depth, face-to-face, interviews were conducted with eight of the ten participants, and two were phone interviews. Each participant was provided with a worksheet to prompt their thinking which simply stated the following organizing question: "If the profession of HRD was excellent in all ways, what five-seven things would be true?" Participants were directed to use this question as a springboard to spur conversation during the interviews and were instructed that the focus of the interview would not be on their list of excellencies, but rather on the assumptions and beliefs driving those ideas of excellencies. These initial interviews were unstructured to facilitate discussion of topics raised by the participants.

All interviews were approximately two hours long and were audio-taped. Interviews were transcribed professionally, and were carefully verified by the researcher. In addition, member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) were conducted with each of the 10 participants to ensure accurate interpretation and to discuss follow-up questions. These were tape-recorded phone conversations that were then partially transcribed by the researcher.

Sample

Qualitative inquiry focuses on in-depth, small, information-rich cases selected purposefully. It was estimated that members of the scholarly community might be well-suited for participation in this study because of (a) their intense and scholarly interest in HRD and (b) the likelihood that this was a pool of people who are quite familiar with a diverse range of issues facing the field, and have done quite serious thinking on issues related to HRD. All participants were then chosen on the basis that they have served a leadership role in a scholarly association related to HRD. That is, each participant has been either: (a) an incoming, current, or past president of the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD), or (b) a current or past chair of the American Society for Training and Development's (ASTD) Research Committee. This sampling criteria was chosen because (a) they

represent two primary scholarly associations of the field, (b) leaders of these associations are elected/nominated by their membership, (c) these are active scholars who have made marked contributions to the field of HRD. The current and previous four leaders from each of the associations were solicited for this study, and are listed in Table 1. All participants solicited agreed to participate in the study, and agreed for their names to be published. However, quotes/excerpts are *not* accompanied with a name, and information that might make it possible to identify the participant has been edited out of any published documents.

Table 1. Scholarly Leaders Participating in the Study

AHRD Presidents	ASTD Research Committee Chairs
Gary N. McLean (2000-)	Victoria J. Marsick (1997-1999)
Elwood F. Holton (1998-2000)	Darlene Russ-Eft (1994-1996)
Richard A. Swanson (1996-1998)	Ronald L. Jacobs (1991-1993)
Karen E. Watkins (1994-1996)	Timothy Baldwin (1991)
R. Wayne Pace (1993-1994)	Neal Chalofsky (1989-1990)

Analysis

Qualitative data analysis demands inductive reasoning to search for important meanings and patterns in what the researcher has heard and seen. The process used to analyze the data was based on the constant comparative method (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) and generic coding procedures. These included analysis of three interviews to develop an initial coding scheme, extensive review of all transcripts, recursive evolutions of the coding scheme, the use of an electronic database to facilitate queries and coding, and two peer reviews.

Findings: Who HRD Serves

One of the most provocative questions raised during the interviews conducted for this study was a rather simple one, but one that brings this question of who HRD serves to the forefront: for what end do HRD professionals do their work and for who's benefit? The participant that raised this shared a story of a person who recently asked him whether HRD was about developing the human resources of an organization or about developing the resources of the human. The answers that emerged and were categorized in this theme indicate a few different perspectives.

The goal of this section is to provide a creative, descriptive, and interpretive account of this theme entitled "Who HRD Serves". The focus is on reporting the sub-themes that emerged with an attempt, given the limited space provided here, to hear the voices of the participants of the study through excerpted quotes from the interview transcripts. Excerpts from actual interviews are separated from the text and are bulleted by a double-quote (").

HRD Serves Individuals: Developing the Resources of the Human

A strong commitment to individuals and human development emerged here as one participant explicitly stated:

"The HRD profession would be excellent if it saw its role as being responsible to and for individual workers rather than management."

This quote represents this sub-theme well as a perspective that emphasized that HRD should put people and their needs first, over and above those of the organization, because it is defined by its work with people.

"We are defined in part by our work with people, of human resource development. So fundamentally it has to do with people."

Part of how this was demonstrated was through a strong focus on individuals and helping them to fully develop. Building on a notion of whole-person development versus development based on solely job/organizational needs, these participants advocated development of the whole person to his/her optimal potential:

"It is the development of people that is the goal of HRD."

"...we're all about helping people reach their potential..."

When asked about who defines "potential", the answer was that the individual does because individuals inherently work towards self-actualization—striving to grow and work in creative and meaningful ways.

Putting People First Pays-Off. Putting people first was justified because, according to these participants, investment in people pays-off for the organization. While the people that advocated serving the unique needs of the individual first downplayed the needs of the organization, they were not ignorant of them. These participants

believed either that tending to people is what best positions the organization for optimal performance, or that HRD simply should not focus on organizations at all. The following quotes emphasize these perspectives:

"A really good organization that puts people first is going to be profitable anyways, because people are going to want to work for them and be productive and loyal. If you put people before profits, you're going to get your profit anyways—it's where you put your effort and energy and focus.

"Business decisions that are made on the bottom line are uniformly unsuccessful. ...They're focusing on the wrong thing. You don't get success by focusing on success, you focus on other things. If you focus on taking care of your employees, they will make money for you.

Minimize Focus on Profit. Moreover, participants also surfaced some suspicion about organizations that focus too heavily on achieving profit over all other things. The commitment to whole-person development was also held up as a more worthy goal than that of chasing profit—emphasizing that profit in and of itself is not bad, but there must be additional, more humane goals:

"To them it's margin, it's not about people.

"...there's just too much power and greed and we see it in all our daily lives. ...it's just power and accumulation. ...but again if that's what we're all about—helping organizations and CEOs become multi-millionaires, I don't want any part of that. There's gotta be something more...got to be a hell of a lot more. And to me the "more" is that I'm in this for people.

Finally, one participant took a much stronger position that focuses solely on human development, regardless of whether profit or organizational performance ensues. And another participant stressed that the organization should be seen as secondary to serving the needs of the individual

"If you don't develop, if you don't make the person, then even if you make a profit, it's not worth it. It's the development of talent that's important. That may result in a profit, it may not result in any profit—and that doesn't make any difference! ...That should not be a consideration in this field at all, and the person who makes that the consideration misunderstands the nature of the field.

"Organizations for me are important in helping individuals achieve their purpose in life.

Putting people first was justified because, according to these participants' beliefs, investment in people pays-off. Thus, organizations were encouraged to focus on people and development (and other worthy goals) and to view profit as a by-product of doing the right things.

HRD Serves Organizations: Developing the Human Resources of an Organization

This emphasis on serving the individual first and having confidence in the return-on-investment for the organization is quite different from an alternative approach that emerged during this study, as represented in the following quote:

"We would be excellent if we were seen as furthering the mission of the organizations or entities that sponsor our efforts.

The excellency described above is the antithesis of the excellency that opened the former section which placed serving the individual first. In this perspective, HRD is primarily responsible to and for the organization. That HRD should primarily serve the organization was tied to the idea that HRD is sponsored by organizations and, thus, should be the primary client. One person interviewed for this study listed the following excellency:

"The profession would be excellent if we understand that the system is always the client...the simple answer would be (from Wilfred Beham's work at Tavistock on to Lewin and Argyris) that the thing that created the field of OD was that they moved beyond the individual as the unit of focus. ...The real stakeholder has got to be the system—that's where the money is coming from, that's the only reason you're there. HRD is fundamentally hosted by some organization or system, it's not a free-floating system.

Aligned with this presumption that HRD is sponsored by organizations and a personal understanding of how organizations function were also strong beliefs that HRD should support organizational mission and contribute to enhanced organizational performance:

"What distinguishes HRD from general education is that it is sponsored by or it's within the boundaries of some kind of organization that has a purpose...and that it should be engaged in furthering that mission.

"And so this is the business side of me. You know, I was born and raised in a family business and understanding that you have customers. You have decided what the fundamental purpose of the organization is and, as a result of that, anything that doesn't align itself with that is vulnerable to be picked off, thrown away, not taken seriously. I understand that and it's OK.

Here is a strong expression of how HRD should be contributing to the purpose of the organization—aligning with its mission and helping the organization achieve its goals while also helping it to connect its parts to the system whole. This was reiterated by someone else, too, when speaking about who HRD's primary client is:

"So when I go into a department, for instance, I'm very interested in how that department is working to enhance the overall organizational mission. And so my role is to help them see that—to help them see the connect or disconnect between what they're doing and what the system is doing.

The realities of organizations seemed to dictate to some participants that HRD serve those needs. A strong concept that emerged was about how organizations are not in the business of learning, and the need for HRD to realize this and work towards the goals of its sponsor:

"Organizations are not in business to learn. They're in the business to perform, and learning is a vehicle to that.

"I wonder where does that come from? Where do you get the belief that you have the right to exist and to be awarded resources day in and day out? In the final analysis you're only to get what you get based on merit—because you've earned it.

Mission, Not Just Profit. People who advocated supporting organizational mission and helping organizations to achieve more also emphasized that this should not be mistaken as a unabashed emphasis on increasing profit. For instance, one person reflected:

"I've never understood why the so called "performance perspective" which is really mission-oriented is a problem. It's goals, vision, purposes—you know, what it is it's trying to do. You're doing it for organizational or system intent.

This quote was a part of a larger discussion about how working towards the achievement of organizational goals has often been misinterpreted, according to this participant, as a focus on only profit. This participant believed that the focus on mission and goals of the organization is a valid assumption for any type of organization (i.e non-profits, government, community organizations, unions, etc...).

More over, participants called for not mistaking this focus on system intent as a heed for short-term profit at the expense of all else. Some people interviewed for this study consider there to be a more ethical focus on helping organizations achieve many kinds of performance, and for both short- and long-term interests. These participants encouraged HRD to deal with managing the tension between short- and long-term investment and short- and long-term return on that investment.

Putting Organizations First Pays-Off. Just as the people that advocated primarily serving individuals did not ignore the needs of the organization, so too the people that advocated putting the organization first did not ignore serving the needs of the individuals. The following quotes demonstrate this:

"When you look at the issue of impact, to me, the key criteria is that organizations function better, profit more. Then, as sub-set of that, in fact, the way that organizations function better is that they treat their people better—that they have better learning and better people practices.

"Organizations need us to help them thrive in a changing world, if they don't do that they're pretty marginal overall. Then as part of that...I think they'll see clearly that we improve people's lives.

Finally, there was some discussion from two different participants about the challenges associated with balancing organizational needs with those of individuals:

"If you want to keep jobs, if you want to sustain those things, if you want the most number of jobs for the most people, if you want the top executives to change their thinking and their work behavior, you want the work processes to fundamentally change to be not only better but also more humane...boy, you're going to run into the meat grinder. That's tough work! The easiest thing for an HRD person is to be a humanist at the individual level. Piece of cake!

Not a Blind Tool of Management. Serving the needs of the organization was not to be misinterpreted as HRD being a blind tool of management. Some participants called for HRD to use its commitment to individuals as courage to stand up for and demand better, more humane people practices, as demonstrated in the following:

"We would be excellent in all ways if we became advocates, in fact, champions for HRD practices with ethics and integrity. So, like any profession, I think we have the obligation to battle against unethical practices.

Another person talked about how a deep belief in human beings demands courage from HRD professionals:

"...at that point it takes an enormous amount of courage...if that's our job...to talk back to the system, the organization, about it's behavior, it's system, it's logic, it's inadequacies. You know, if you're supposed to be enhancing the whole organization and that organization is violating all your core beliefs, then you have to make some decisions at that point. You have to challenge, you have to have courage to advocate for those core beliefs. So I think that they get your stomach in knots.

Serve Multiple Stakeholders: Win-Win-Win

Still yet there was another perspective emerged during this research as a few participants made a plea to stop all this talk about choosing *either* the organization *or* the individual as HRD's primary client. They said:

"But it's the either/or stuff again that gets difficult for me. Well it goes back to, again, an issue that has been confronting the field...and I get irritated every time I see it...when people get into the argument about whether HRD is

performance or learning. Well, it's just a dumb question to start with! But it goes back to my perception of how much we are driven by either/or questions. Instead of trying to find an "and" question that helps us to embrace a larger and bigger piece of what has the potential of impacting lives in the positive way.

First of all, some people pointed out, HRD actually serves many more than just two clients. Two people pointed out that, at the very least, there are three stakeholders and there should be a more expansive view of stakeholders:

"...there's at least a triadic relationship in any endeavor—the consultant is working for a client, while the beneficiary is somebody else. And so who do we serve?

"The profession of HRD would be excellent if it recognized the importance of multiple stakeholders. That HRD serves a whole variety of stakeholders—not just management, not just the workers, not just the people sitting in training classes, not just the people who buy the training programs, but they serve a wider community...presumably they even serve the shareholders of the company in some form or another.

Recognizing that more stakeholders presents increased responsibility to balance and work towards the mutual win of many, one person explained that what was needed was a new focus on win-win-win:

"You know, I've done a substantial amount of work with unions. And this whole idea of not a win-win situation but a "win-win-win" situation—win for the organization, win for the union, win for the individual members. So how do you converge outcomes for these partnerships? How do you get win-win-win situations? But the idea is that it would be not just a hope, but a declared intent with outcomes explicated of what those wins might be.

Two other participants talked about how focusing on multiple stakeholders rather than an "either/or" scenario also necessitated weighing conflicting goals more explicitly to achieve that win-win-win.

Just as some advocated a new conception of multiple stakeholders, another person emphasized that the artificial choice between learning and performance was insufficient to guide the aims of HRD, and discussed how HRD should honor multiple goals or outcomes such as integrity, climate, globalization, and peace. This certainly indicates a move towards a more expansive notion of who HRD serves and what it does in the process.

Analysis of Findings: Who HRD Serves

An analysis of the findings reveals three distinctive sets of beliefs about who/what HRD serves. Each is briefly summarized below, and some of the logic within each set begins to emerge. Some key insights are also discussed.

HRD Serves Individuals

The driving force to serve individuals emerged very strongly from one group of participants interviewed for this research. For them, HRD is defined by its work with people, and, as a result, there must be a deep commitment to help people grow, actualize, and achieve self-fulfillment. This commitment to individuals was contrasted with a much lesser commitment to organizations, or, as for some interviewed, by a strong resistance for HRD to work "for" the organization. People who spoke of serving the needs of individuals had strong ideas about putting people first, and a few felt that that should be done regardless of the organization and their needs. There was little discussion about potential needs of the organization or of HRD's role in helping organizations to fulfill those needs. Nor was there discussion of balancing individual and organizational needs. Rather, the focus was largely on the individual.

A few participants did acknowledge that there would be an eventual pay-off for the organization that invests in people, however there remained a clear distaste for organizations that focus too heavily on profit. This suspicion was reinforced by one participant who explained that HRD professionals who approach their work from the "performance perspective" abuse employees and fundamentally misunderstand the profession of HRD. This is a clear signal of a very different belief system than the one that is described in the following sub-theme that advocated serving organizations.

HRD Serves Organizations

This sub-theme introduced what can only be characterized as almost the polar opposite of that forwarded above. Here value was placed on serving the needs of the organization, and helping the organization that sponsors HRD achieve its mission. Indeed, it was implied that HRD is fundamentally defined by its work in and for organizations.

Both of the above positions (serving people and serving organizations) seemed to agree with the logic that effective people practices make for an effective organization. However, as one participant pointed out, it has more to do with how one approaches that belief. This group heavily focused on the organization's effectiveness and advocated effective people practices as a primary tool to help achieve that success. While the group that advocated

serving individuals approached this primarily from the individuals' perspective. This is a very fine, but significant distinction between these two sub-themes.

Another thing revealed in the data from was a rather different view of organizations. Organizations were viewed as existing to achieve mission/goals. Although the role of organizations was simply not talked about as explicitly in the sub-theme detailed above, there was clearly less valuing of the organizations mission/goals, and a more negative connotation of organizations and their motives. In the "serve organizations" sub-theme, however, there was clear acknowledgement that organizations exist for reasons other than to help people learn, and that HRD should be aligned with the system's mission/goals, within some ethical boundaries around humane and fair human resource and business practices.

What was even more interesting is that the participants that grounded themselves in serving organizations did not say that they would choose the organization *over* the individual. It was not an either/or dichotomy for them, as it seemed to be for the group where individuals were chosen *over* the organization. In this sub-theme, commitment to the organization was not assumed to be at the expense of individuals—the commitment to individuals, their development, and good treatment was assumed and deeply held. Additionally, a few participants in this section talked about the challenge of balancing the sometimes conflicting needs of organizations and the individuals. This was characterized as a struggle, and appeared to be an issue that they actively dealt with in their work.

Contrasted with this, the group that focused primarily on serving the needs of individuals did not pay much attention to the organization. A few individuals emphasized that organizational needs should come second, and there was little apparent struggle to balance conflict between the individual and the organization. In fact, one person in that section commented that organizations would have to succeed *in spite of* HRD. Whereas the group that supported serving the organization would most likely say that organizations succeed *because of* HRD.

HRD Serves Multiple Stakeholders

This idea of "win-win-win" for multiple stakeholders and in multiple ways can almost be characterized as an extension of the sub-theme that emerged above which reflected on balancing the needs of the individual and the organization. The emphasis here, though, was much stronger on being explicit about who potential stakeholders might be, what aims each has, and how all parties involved can optimize around those goals. This is such an important idea for HRD! As can be seen in both the results of this study as well as in much of the HRD literature, the discussion of who is served by HRD has been traditionally dominated by an either/or paradigm. As a result, the conversation has focused on choosing one or the other rather than exploring what it truly might mean to balance multiple stakeholders and multiple aims. There is a clear need for better and more explicit models of partnering for "win-win-win" and for managing divergent needs.

Conclusion & Implications for HRD

An analysis of the rich quotes of these scholarly leaders reveals that there are points of convergence and divergence among the beliefs forwarded. The ideas held in common (strong commitment to individuals and the idea that good human resource practices benefit the organization) offer a few foundational beliefs that may be considered as core to the HRD profession. Identifying just a few core beliefs is a critical first step in forming a philosophical foundation for the profession—a foundation on which values, morals, ethics, and best practices will be built. This activity is important in order to ensure the advancement and excellence of the profession, as well as to better differentiate HRD from other human resource professions. In this way, then, this study has helped to elucidate a few potential organizing principles for HRD by tapping the wisdom of experienced and leading scholars.

It is also important to note key differences among these leaders. It is vital that divergent viewpoints develop over basic questions such as those that emerged here, and it is our responsibility to explicitly surface and analyze them. Magee (1971) tells us that "one of the tasks of philosophy is mapping the logic of...discourse, laying it out, so to speak, so that a person can make his way about it successfully" (p. 45). A central finding of this research raises the possibility that the current discourse focusing on the question of the purpose of HRD and the two opposing "answers" of performance vs. learning may actually not be the correct question or answer at all. Rather, these findings show that issue of who HRD serves is a much more telling and divisive issue, and one that may point to two or more distinct emerging paradigms in HRD.

These similarities and differences must be extensively explored in future research so that we can continue to question that which is core in HRD and to identify the divergences which mark various emerging schools of thought within the field. Even with these initial, exploratory findings, we can no longer postulate that core

differences in HRD knowledge and practice are attributable to the camps of performance vs. learning, and we also can no longer continue assuming that all HRD practice and knowledge is derived from and lives in one school of thought. Rather we must acknowledge emerging schools of thought and thoroughly articulate them. It should be clear what the belief systems are, how they vary from one another, and how different belief systems impact the practice of HRD.

Future research should include additional in-depth study of beliefs underlying HRD and the interplay of these beliefs with HRD theory and practice. This study will soon be replicated with a set of leading practitioners to explore any similarities and differences from the academics interviewed here. In addition, many more HRD professionals could be queried about the beliefs that drive their actions in HRD. This can be done by replicating the methodology outlined in Ruona (1999) as well as by conducting extensive surveying. Innovative methodologies such as critical incidents and case studies are also promising as effective tools to uncloak beliefs and share them with the profession for consideration and on-going dialogue. And, of course, the organizing framework for the study should be utilized in future research as a tool that will help HRD scholars question the logic of core beliefs that are forwarded to begin to truly map sound, integrated belief systems.

The hope is that this research will help the field to better navigate through key issues it is facing and really begin to explore the deep assumptions that drive the field. It is at this level that generative conversations take place and real change begins.

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Theorising Human Resource Development

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In the UK the academic status of HRD is problematic and has only recently become a significant part of the university curriculum. Part of the 'problem' of HRD relates to the research base which underpins the subject. This paper attempts to derive a conceptual 'map' of HRD in the UK, thus it's focus is on the process of theorising HRD rather than presenting a particular position on HRD theory. The paper does not report specific research findings.

Keywords: HRD in the UK, theorising process, holographic metaphor.

This paper draws upon the emerging body of research in HRD, primarily UK-based, which provides the underpinning for the conceptual, theoretical and practical advance of HRD. We aim to provide an overview of many of the conceptual and theoretical concerns surrounding the meaning and understanding of HRD. These issues and concerns relate to both the ontological and epistemological perspectives on HRD, which in turn influence our vision of researching and understanding HRD. The paper offers a contribution to the on going debate surrounding the theoretical foundations of HRD (Lynham 2000; Walton 1999) and the purpose and value of HRD professional practice (Holton 2000). The paper presents an analysis of the key tenets of the various positions in these debates. In doing so, we provide a comparison of American and European conceptions of HRD. This informs the overview of the diversity of research philosophies, processes and practices currently being applied in the UK. The paper also draws on the work of Keenoy (1999) a sharp critic of the literature of HRM and tries to apply his critique into a better conceptual understanding of HRD by developing a metaphor of HRD as a 'hologram'.

Theoretical Context

The process of defining HRD by academics, researchers and practitioners is proving to be frustrating, elusive and confusing. This suggests that HRD has not established a distinctive conceptual or theoretical identity (Garavan et al., 2000; Hatcher, 2000). The process of defining HRD is *frustrated* by the apparent lack of boundaries and parameters; *elusiveness* is created through the lack of depth of empirical evidence of some conceptual aspects of HRD. *Confusion* arises over the philosophy, purpose, location and language of HRD. This is further complicated by the epistemological and ontological perspectives of individual stakeholders and commentators in the HRD arena (Swanson et al., 2000). All research, to varying degrees, is tied to a particular theoretical framework and to a general body of knowledge. This, in turn, is the product of a complex interplay of philosophical arguments thus, the 'complication' noted by Swanson (op. cit.) is perfectly natural but renders the task of analysing the 'meaning' of HRD more difficult. Inevitably this draws us into the realm of philosophy.

Philosophical and Conceptual Dimensions

As Swanson et al (2000) argue "philosophy is a systematic examination of the assumptions that underlie action" (p. 1126). Therefore, in order to understand action, in this case HRD research, it is necessary to engage with philosophies of HRD to make explicit the rationales underpinning competing perspectives.

They put forward three interactive elements of the philosophical framework of HRD. These are, firstly, *ontology* (how we see our world); secondly, *epistemology* (how we think about our world) and, thirdly, *axiology* (the

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values that determine how we should and actually act in research and practice). The dynamic relationship of these three elements will influence an individual's understanding and expression of HRD. Therefore it is useful and appropriate to address philosophical issues in attempting to understand HRD. This has been strongly reinforced recently by the publication of a thoughtful collection of reflections on the philosophical foundations of *HRD practice* by leading US academics in the field of HRD. (Ruona & Roth, 2000)

The philosopher Thomas Kuhn first introduced the idea of scientific paradigms in his path-breaking book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* in 1962. This book has proven to be seminal in the development of theory and research in the social sciences and is likely to have an equally profound and enduring influence on the conceptual and theoretical development in HRD. The concept of paradigms, introduced by Kuhn (1962), is often used to describe philosophical frameworks informing and guiding scientific research. McAndrew (2000) usefully applies this notion in analysing significant influences on HRD theory and practice.

One of the best-known paradigmatic frameworks is that developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979). They forward four broad paradigms, which affect the development of social theory. These are the *functionalist paradigm*, which assumes an objective, social reality, which can be empirically analysed and understood through application of scientific methods. Social systems are seen as inherently concerned with stability and continuity to serve regulatory purposes. The *interpretive paradigm* assumes that individuals and their interactions create social reality, subjectively. Multiple social realities are created maintained and changed and there is no single, objective entity to be analysed and understood. However, in common with the functional perspective, the interpretive paradigm assumes an underlying pattern and order in the social world, i.e. regulatory focus, rather than a change orientation. Much of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) insights still inform contemporary debates in organisational analysis.

The *radical humanist paradigm* assumes that reality is socially and subjectively created and therefore not capable of objective analysis seeing social institutions as negative in the sense of constraining and controlling human thought, action and potential. These negative aspects tend to alienate rather than focuses on positive outcomes. The concern is with radical change rather than regulation. The *radical structuralist paradigm* assumes that social systems have independent, concrete and objective existence and are capable of scientific analysis. This perspective also encompasses social systems as oppressive and alienating and assumes an inherent drive for radical change in society.

Variants of these arguments are evident in the emergence of new perspectives on HRD framed as *post-positivist* (Trochim, 1999) and *critical realist* (Sayer, 2000) positions. The former of these develops elements of the Burrell and Morgan functionalist and interpretive paradigms whilst the critical realist perspective takes forward a concern with meaning and interpretation that echoes the radical humanist and radical structuralist paradigms. However these have not crystallised into a simple bi-polarisation. Rather the whole area is characterised by *paradigm incommensurability*, which in turn reflects an impact on methodological development.

To date, there appears to be little sustained and detailed attention given to philosophical influences on HRD, but as Kuchinke (2000) argues "paradigm debates can deepen theory and provide the foundation for new research" (p. 32). This view is supported by Swanson et al (2000), amongst others who identify implications of philosophy for research, theory building, practice and the evolution of HRD. The role of the varying paradigms discussed here, representing as they do different philosophical frameworks, in shaping HRD theory and practice is well illustrated by the work of Lynham (2000). It is evident that a significant outcome of adopting different paradigms will be varying emphasis on the possible alternative purposes of HRD.

This variety of perspectives demonstrates vividly that there is no dominant paradigm of HRD research. It also illustrates what may be meant by 'paradigm incommensurability' in organisational research. However such a position is healthy. There is no *single lens* for viewing HRD research and there are *many voices* expressing opinions. It may be that, as HRD academics become more sophisticated in theorising, then greater clarity and paradigm commensurability will occur. It may also be the case that the increasingly influential discourse of postmodernism, which is strongly established in the field of organisation studies (Alvesson & Deetz, 1999; Burrell, 1999) and is now evident in the literature of strategic change, will come to have an impact on HRD researchers (Ford & Ford, 1995).

Purpose of HRD

Lying behind the main philosophical debates concerning the nature of HRD, there is a concurrent set of debates concerning the purpose of HRD. According to Holton (2000) the debates on purpose centre on the *learning* versus *performance* perspectives. Should HRD practice focus on the well being of the individual or should interests of the shareholders predominate? This section presents a rudimentary map of what the various claims of the purpose of HRD might be. Hatcher (2000) proposes that HRD research should focus on the economic benefits, systems theory, social benefits and ethics of HRD and thus indirectly attempts a reconciliation of these two perspectives.

Kuchinke (op. cit.) presents a classification of schools of thought according to the central focus of the developmental activity: *person-centred*, *production-centred* and *principled problem solving*, each deriving from different philosophical traditions. Gourlay (2000) in attempting to clarify the nature of HRD states that "it focuses on theory and practice relating to training, development and learning within organisations, both for individuals and in the context of business strategy and organisational competence formation" (p. 99).

Garavan et al (2000) articulate three perspectives of HRD as being concerned with *capabilities*, *psychological contracts* and *learning organisation/organisational learning*. Each of these is associated with different root disciplines. They also imply different purposes in their prescriptions for HRD practice. There is also variability in relation to the purpose of HRD arising from the root disciplines seen to be underpinning HRD. These include; adult education, instructional design and performance technology, psychology, business and economics, sociology, cultural anthropology, organisation theory and communications, philosophy, axiology and human relations theories (Willis, quoted in Walton, 1999). There is also a running sub-terrainian debate within the field of HRD on the 'discipline' status of some these root disciplines. As well as variability of purpose, conceptual propositions derived from and built on these root disciplines also influence individual perspectives of HRD. For example, in the typology devised by Garavan et al (2000) the capabilities perspective is primarily associated with human capital theory and the application of economics in a resource based view of the firm. In a similar vein, Weinberger (1998) identifies systems theory as being distinct from learning theory in relation to their influence on HRD, leading to different formulations on the nature and purpose of HRD practice.

What is apparent from the above commentary is that there is no consensus over the conceptual-theoretical identity of HRD and related purpose. The purpose is contingent upon both philosophical and theoretical perspectives.

Boundaries and Parameters of HRD

This discussion demonstrates the multidisciplinary nature of HRD makes precise definition difficult. There is some evidence in the literature of ideological or descriptive-normative models for aspects of HRD. For example Walton (1999) has identified 'Strategic HRD' as a distinctive, almost freestanding, dimension of HRD. Similarly, the much-discussed idea of the 'Learning Organisation', (Senge, 1997) is a good example of the ways in which the normative prescriptive models are used as the basis for examining current practice (Dibella & Nevis, 1998). HRD is often presented as different to training and development with the focus being on learning and development for the organisation as well as the individual. There is often a futuristic focus, with prescribed contingent outcomes. Although there are often attempts to address both the practice and the conceptual aspects of HRD, the drive to express HRD in relation to models, frameworks and typologies, could result in a distancing between rhetoric and reality, similar to that found in HRM debates. As Hatcher argues, "Without a focus on the theoretical foundations of research and practice, HRD is destined to remain *atheoretical* in nature and poor practice will continue to undermine its credibility" (2000, p. 45; emphasis added).

Historically, the development of HRD can be traced from training and instructional design, to training and development, to employee development, to Human Resource Development (Jacobs, 2000). Traditionally, the field of HRD was defined by practice, not from a theoretical frame or set of research (Lyhnam, 2000). More recently, the emergence of HRD related journals have presented an opportunity to define the field on basis of theory and practice (Jacobs, 2000). There is also a blurring of the boundaries in relation to the affiliation of researchers. Many early American researchers emanated from either an instructional design or an adult educational base. Recently Jacobs (2000) has reported that there are an increased number of manuscripts coming from business schools. This trend is a reversal of the European and UK situation. In the UK, HRD is very much the child of the explosion of HRM literature in the 1980s and 1990s (McGoldrick & Stewart, 1996).

In addition, the scope of HRD research can be seen to be expanding, with recent focus on areas that were not traditionally considered to be within the domain of HRD. These include organisational leadership, organisational values, workforce development issues at the societal level and labour economics (Donovan & Marsick, 2000). Multidisciplinary foundations and an expanding scope both have the effect of expanding the discursive resources and therefore language available to and used by HRD academics and practitioners. This last point is worth a little more elaboration, particularly with respect to Hatcher's remark, noted above, concerning the poverty of HRD practice being a function of the poverty of HRD theory. Rather than seeking to stake a claim to particular territory, HRD should be looking to enhance its capability to theorise on the basis of a solid research base. As was noted earlier, there is no single lens through which HRD is viewed, nor should there be. The debates which are now emerging from the Academy of HRD in the US and the University Forum for HRD in Europe and the UK, indicate a

growing vitality for the development of good HRD theory. In taking these discussions and debates forward it is essential to pay close attention to issues of language and meaning.

Language of HRD: 'jargon-ridden' and 'meaning-hidden'?

There is a clear and continuing paradox concerning the language used in the discourse of HRD. Walton (1999) neatly sums it up as follows: "this constant concern with meaning and learning and their subtleties/shades/tones/cadences by those responsible for HRD can paradoxically be (yet another) reason why the HRD language appears so jargon-ridden and meaning-hidden." He continues: "Words are being asked to express the ambiguities faced by those trying to translate the subtleties of meaning into learning frameworks and language that hopefully capture all the nuances of actual experience and associated reflection, conceptualisation and experimentation" (p. 54). Social processes through which this has been attempted involve the construction of linguistic categories and an alteration in the received meaning of existing expressions. New terms in HRD include, lifelong learning and psychological contracts, whilst terms with scope for new meaning include competence and competencies, integration, teamwork, communication and commitment. Although all of these are useful to describe practices, conceptually there is a danger that these denote rhetorical, often managerial, aspirations and desired states of being. A lack of effective linguistic categories to clarify what is happening within HRD could result in a combination of illusion and allusion, as there are no definitive words to signify its identity.

Many of Walton's concerns resonate with Legge's (1995) sharp critique of rhetoric and reality of HRM. However this point is challenged by Sambrook (2000) who provides an analysis which draws no distinction between rhetoric and reality or words and action. In her view rhetoric is reality and words constitute action. From this approach, she is able to formulate a typology of 'ideal types' which is capable of accommodating discourse from both academic disciplines and professional practice. Such typologies, as well as those suggested by Garavan et al (op. cit.) and Lynham (2000) may well be useful in capturing and making sense of current variety of discourses within the HRD domain. However a proliferation of linguistic terms with variable meanings has obvious consequences for investigating empirical realities.

Empirical Elusiveness

Empirical elusiveness (Keenoy op. cit.) derives from an *inability to show* that HRD has a substantive presence in organisations. In some respects the issues surrounding the empirical absence or presence of HRD are analogous with those discussed earlier with respect to the conceptual parameters and boundaries. The American Society for Training and Development Research committee identified two major empirical gaps in relation to evidence as being between practitioners and researchers, and between practitioners and senior executives (Dilworth & Redding, 1999). Several European commentators, including Harrison (1998), have found little empirical evidence of 'Strategic HRD' in organisations. Others including Sambrook (1998) identify divergence in the stories told by HRD practitioners and non-HRD managers and employees. These studies suggest a need for closer collaboration between researchers and practitioners in order to build more accurate empirical evidence. Such a need has been expressed by both European (Hamlin et al, 1998) and American (Lynham, 2000) academics.

Locations of HRD

Locations of HRD can be understood in two senses. Firstly, as a description of a physical or sectoral location and secondly, and more importantly, as a feature of the process of organisational design. Reconfiguration of contemporary organisations, the emergence of the small business sector and continued growth in non-standard forms of employment are extending the perimeters of HRD activity. Internal creation of independent business units and growth of outsourcing, subcontracting and down sizing are all impacting on the structures and boundaries of organisations. Similarly the notion of 'employee' appears increasingly transient; employment security is less salient, with apparent continuing growth in temporary, part-time, subcontract and agency work. As a consequence HRD can no longer be seen to operate within the traditional boundaries of an organisation, but spread its influence to the development of those outside, on whom it depends (Walton 1996, 1999). In addition the SME sector is likely to provide a growing location for HRD practice, which may imply an expansion of the meaning of HRD (Hill & Stewart, 2000).

What is apparent from the discussion above is that there is no consensus over the conceptual-theoretical identity of HRD. It can be seen to constitute multiple, shifting, competing and contingent identities, dependent on

philosophical perspectives and influenced by the range of methodological dimensions derived from the literature and from the continuing analysis of ongoing research work.

Critical Analysis

It is our argument that conceptually HRD is still in the intellectual shadows of HRM particularly with respect to HRD research in the UK (McGoldrick & Stewart, 1996). It is instructive however to see all the lessons HRD academics can learn from the theoretical development of HRM. Since its emergence in the late 1980's there have been two distinct strands to the literature advancing HRM. The first of these has been the solid development of texts and journal publications. The second has been a highly critical even polemical literature questioning the academic and root discipline claims of HRM. The strongly critical literature exemplified by Keenoy and Anthony's (1992) portrayal of HRM as "metaphor" and Legge's (1995) critique of the rhetoric of HRM.

One of the sharpest critics is Tom Keenoy (1999) who has written a deeply polemical review of the rise of HRM – which he dubs "HRMism". The article is both challenging and stimulating and poses questions as relevant to the emerging debates about HRD as to the discussion of HRM. His argument is that HRM concepts, practices and theory are, "a source of controversy, confusion and misapprehension." Indeed, he goes further and argues that "at the centre of this unfolding obfuscation lies an infuriating but curious paradox: despite mounting evidence of conceptual fragmentation, empirical incoherence and theoretical vacuity, HRMism has gone from strength to strength (Keenoy, 1999, p. 1). These charges of conceptual fragmentation, empirical, incoherence and theoretical vacuity may equally be applied to HRD. However, emerging from his polemical discourse there is a potentially useful metaphor for HRD.

A Holographic Metaphor?

The key argument that we wish to advance here, in contra-distinction to the way that Keenoy's argument is developed, is that utilising the metaphor of a hologram enables the reconciliation of intrinsic confusions and contradictions of conceptual, theoretical and empirical identities of HRD to be understood. "Holograms are projected images, which, as we shift our visual field in relation to them, appear to have contours, depth and in some cases in movement" (Keenoy, 1999, p. 9). The hologram is comprised of two distinct, discrete processes of technology and social, which are entwined. Both must occur simultaneously for the hologram to exist. Human social action and perception are an integral part of the process required to construct the image. Holograms can be described as 'techno-social' artefacts with a complex ontology (Keenoy, 1999, p. 10). Each is real, but each exists in a different domain. We only see what we are looking for. In order to see the other side, the shaded, deeper side of its identity, we need to change our perspective. The hologram provides a metaphor, which depicts 'social reality' as multi-dimensional, multi-causal, mutually dependent and constantly changing. The holographic reality is only accessible through a reflexive epistemology, which explicitly acknowledges the role of human beings in creating 'social reality'.

The following quotation from Keenoy (1999) is modified and substitutes HRD for HRM "The more [HRD] is undermined by conventional academic analysis, the stronger it seems to have become. Viewed from a holographic perspective this paradox is a consequence of employing a limiting two-dimensional epistemology. (...) Trying to fragment the phenomena and then mapping each fragment against a predetermined definition could be responsible for failure to 'see' [HRD] for what it is" (p. 10-11).

For Keenoy (1999) all of those implicated [in HRD] may all hold different "conceptual-projections" of HRD, which are likely to contradict their actual experience of HRD. From this HRD can be seen as a series of mutually expressive phenomena, which are transient (p. 17). Therefore it is impossible to conclude that HRD does not exist and impossible to conclude that it does exist. HRD exists in so far as it is the process of coming into being. Although we may not be used to conceptualising HRD as social phenomena in this way, such a conception is already present in the learning organisation discourse, which is depicted as a continuous and never ending process.

The holographic metaphor of HRD has some attraction for some of the reasons that Keenoy is sceptical. Whilst most of this paper has argued that HRD has no singular identity, if it is understood as a hologram it could be defined as singular. HRD's singularity would be defined through the properties of the hologram which could be described as "the fluid, multifaceted, integrated social artefacts", which are the 'continuing-outcome' of contextualised learning. HRD then serves as the *collective noun* for the various concepts, theories and methods devised to manage and control learning. This definition embodies our earlier argument concerning the complex interplay of competing ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, which assist in understanding the reality of HRD. The benefits of the holographic metaphor are the following.

- It acknowledges anomaly, uncertainty, ambiguity, multiple identities and transience. It is sensitive to the problem of linguistic expression.
- It permits the encompassment and softening of contradictions and paradoxes of different perspectives of HRD.
- It emphasises the analytical significance of the mutually involved processes of social and discursive construction. i.e. The role of social actors in reconstructing reality, whilst being components of reality.
- It provides interesting methodological questions concerning empirical research. This does not necessarily mean the abandonment of conventional modernist methodology, but emphasises the need for greater interpretative sensitivity. It requires analytical space to accommodate paradox, ambiguity instability as normal predictable outcomes within the praxis relationship.

The holographic metaphor seems to offer an alternative to the dualistic limitations of the modernism perspective and avoids the "limitless relativism" found in some varieties of social constructionism.

The use of metaphors in HRD is not a new phenomenon by any means. Short (2000) provides an excellent review of the use of metaphors in a recent paper. However, the attractions of the holographic metaphor are that it allows for a whole new perspective radically different to those currently associated with the debates on HRD. It provides a perspective, which is grounded in the belief that social reality has to be understood as a "fluid, unfolding process of social accomplishment" and, in addition, "draws attention to the experiential nature of observation and the observational nature of experience. 'Reality' is a fuzzy shimmer between these two movements" (Short, 2000, p. 18)

The implications for theorising and methodological development afforded by consideration of the holographic perspective may not yet amount to a new paradigm. However it does offer a counter to the initial charges that may be laid at the door of HRD theory of conceptual fragmentation and theoretical vacuity. The methodological implications for research design are immense and challenging. But that is a matter for another paper another time.

Conclusions

We offered a detailed analysis of the theoretical context of HRD research by focussing initially on the philosophical and conceptual dimensions. We argued that HRD has no dominant paradigm, at least in the UK. There is no single lens for viewing HRD and indeed that there are many voices articulating particular perspectives. In relation to our questions on the purpose of HRD we found that there is no consensus over the conceptual-theoretical identity of HRD and related purpose. The purpose is contingent upon both philosophical and theoretical perspectives. Arguments on the theoretical foundations of HRD also constitute the core of debates on its scope and boundaries.

We also discussed at length the issues of the boundaries and parameters of HRD where we argued that rather than seeking to stake a claim to particular territory, HRD should be looking to enhance its capability to theorise on the basis of a solid research base. We also addressed the language of HRD as central to advancing theory and research. Such is the significance of the language of HRD that we concluded that the distinction between rhetoric and reality in HRD is a false one. This was a particular theme in a number of chapters. Finally in the theoretical overview we examined the empirical elusiveness and locations of HRD and argued that both of these were intimately bound up with the changing forms and designs of organisations and the need therefore for research in HRD to address these changes.

The concluding section focussed on the holographic metaphor as a novel perspective on HRD. Our thinking in this regard is at an early stage but felt it provided the basis of a paradigm through which HRD can be expressed as a transient phenomenon more difficult to explain than understand. It is also seen as useful in developing new explanatory models of what HRD 'is' 'might be' or 'can be'. Although there is no agreement on what HRD means, it is nonetheless researched, practised and taught.

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Human Resource Development as a Factor in the Inevitable Move to Globalization

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Globalization is the source of considerable discussion, often emotional, throughout the world's businesses and among consumers and citizens. What does this trend mean for HRD? The implications are explored in this opinion piece, based on the author's experiences in thirty countries and reference to selected literature. Concluding that globalization is inevitable, the author makes recommendations for HRD's role, with emphasis on integrity in the process.

Keywords: Global HRD, Globalization, Theory

Globalization is one of today's business buzzwords. You can hardly read a company vision statement or read an article on international business that does not take for granted the continuing influence of globalization on business. Yet, while it affects communications, media, technology, trade, finance, economies, and politics, it is not clear just what globalization means or how individuals, organizations, and governments should respond to it.

As I write these lines, I have just returned from a meeting in Saudi Arabia with the executives of a company that has just made the decision that it must become a "global learning organization." It is a company that has been extremely successful in the Middle East, with literally no competition. But the situation is changing, and they are now facing competition from several other countries. In response, they have decided that they must enter into strategic partnerships (with Germany, Austria, Brazil, the United States, Italy, and others). It has decided that it must have an Internet system (it has had none in the past), and it must establish an MIS system that goes beyond the mainframe. It has some experience in working with managers from various Arab countries, but now it must figure out how to work with managers from several countries, as well as markets, consumers, and business people from those countries. It had felt safe in its isolation, but now it realizes that it must become global to survive.

In spite of continuing efforts of sub-systems to resist (note the recent protests at the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle), the ongoing process of globalization continues to shrink the world. Many want to blame corporations for this process, and there have been many publications and research studies exploring how corporations have tried to maintain control over this process (e.g., Marquardt, 1999). This paper argues, however, that neither corporations, world federations (WTO, GATT, World Bank, IMF, UN), or even governments can control the process of globalization. Factors that continue to feed this process, as well as those that impact the process negatively, corporately and individually, are explored, based primarily on the authors' experiences in 30 countries, but also referencing selected literature. Attempts are made to provide a more global definition of Human Resource Development (HRD) than has been used in the past. HRD is explored both as a facilitator of globalization, and as an outcome of the globalization process. Recommendations for future research conclude the paper.

Definitions

What is globalization? Lodge (1995) described it as a process that is both technological and human. Global information and communication foster the linkage of global agents--multinational corporations--while the globalization process is pulled by customer desires and pushed by talented corporate managers with global managing skills.

Friedman (2000) defined globalization as

the inexorable integration of markets, nation-states and technologies to a degree never witnessed before--in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is enabling the world to reach into individuals, corporations and nation-states farther, faster, deeper, cheaper than ever before. (p. 9)

More often, this word simply means doing business abroad. Rhinesmith (1996), however, pointed out that doing business abroad is only the first step instead of the complete story. To be global, a company must also create "a corporate culture and value system that allow it to move its resources anywhere in the world to achieve the

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greatest competitive advantage. ...Being global requires a mindset and skills that extend far beyond the current scope of most organizations" (p. 5). Rhinesmith emphasized the importance of people whose global mindset and behavioral change are largely what globalization is about. For many, developing the right people is what "thinking globally" really means (Donlon, Darwent, Cabral, & Grub, 1996).

McLean (1995) defined globalization as

an evolutionary process that moves from exporting (with low risk and high control) through various stages of increasing risk with greater equity investment to the point at which the organization emerges as a totally interdependent and interrelated organization, in which the concept of "home country" disappears in favor of a truly global organization and perspective. (p. 309)

Friedman (2000) viewed globalization as "not simply a trend or a fad but is, rather, an international system." He described it as the system that has replaced the old Cold War system. The new system, according to Friedman, has "its own rules and logic" that "directly or indirectly influence the politics, environment, geopolitics, and economics of virtually every country in the world" (p. ix).

The Dilemma

The problem is that globalization is a two-edged sword. It can be seen as positive, usually by those who benefit from it. But it is also viewed as negative, often by those who are most affected by it negatively. The situation is well summarized in the web article, "Perspectives" (1998):

Globalization is dynamic and real, causing numerous and often radical changes in all but the most remote places. Depending on your point of view, circumstances, and prospects, the process can be seen as hugely positive—or grossly negative. But the issue of globalization and our collective response to it promises to define who prospers and who will not well into the 21st century. Inasmuch as the pain caused by some aspects of globalization is undeniable, the real issue is whether the negative effects of its sweeping processes can be ameliorated—and the positive effects enhanced. Because, without doubt, the forward march of globalization itself is unstoppable. The negative effects of globalization can be softened only through new and higher levels of international cooperation and consultation, filtered through a new system of moral values that puts human welfare and social justice ahead of the predominantly materialistic paradigm currently in vogue. The urgency for all peoples everywhere to cooperate together...can never be overemphasized.

It is also true, however, that globalization, though now recognized as a system, is not new. As soon as the cave dwellers began to trade, a form of globalization had begun. When the tribes of indigenous people gathered to trade, select mates, decide policies, and hunt together, globalization was taking place. Marco Polo's travels to China; the voyages of the Vikings to Greenland and Newfoundland; the explorations of the Spanish, Portuguese, Italians, British, and so on, during the Middle Ages; were all forms of globalization. Friedman (2000) concluded that a similar type of globalization as is now occurring occurred during the period of the mid-1800s to the late 1920s, comparing "the volumes of trade and capital flows across borders, relative to GNPs, and the flow of labor across borders, relative to populations" (p. xvi). This era was also marked with several inventions that caused the world to shrink, according to Friedman, from large to medium: the invention of the steamship, the development of the telegraph, the completion of railroad lines across many countries, and the invention of the telephone. He claimed that recent technologies (microchips, satellites, fiber optics, the Internet), however, have caused the world to shrink from "medium to small" (p. xix). The rapidity of change that we are experiencing suggests that this shrinking of the world will continue unabated.

So, while the dilemma created by globalization is not new, its impact, nevertheless, is exacerbated because of its magnitude. While teaching my International HRD course in Saudi Arabia, with students from Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan, the United Kingdom, and the United States, no issue caused more emotion than our discussion of globalization--both in the classroom and in our Internet conversations. And the backlash against globalization took place while class members made cell phone calls to their stockbrokers in London! It is this dilemma that I would now like to explore.

Factors Supporting Globalization

Many in business take for granted that globalization is good for it, for its owners, for its employees, and for the country in which it is operating. Companies decide to go global for many reasons: new markets, economies of scale, production efficiency, access to a world talent pool, technologies, and competitive resources, among others. As Donlon (1997) concluded, "The question is no longer whether one wishes to compete in the worldwide arena, but

how one can do that successfully" (p. 62). So globalization is seen as a way to open new markets, to acquire flexibility that allows business to go where all of the inputs of business costs, including labor, can be minimized, thus increasing productivity. Productivity allows a business to stay in business, at a minimum, and to increase its market share, at the optimum.

Globalization is also a way of viewing the world as a freer, more open society, in which there is free movement of ideas, people, values, and systems across the globe, allowing everyone, ideally, to be able to choose both a personal and a corporate life style.

Friedman (2000) argued that globalization is the product of the democratization of finance, technology and information, but what is driving all three of these is the basic human desire for a better life--a life with more freedom to choose how to prosper, what to eat, what to wear, where to live, where to travel, how to work, what to read, what to write, and what to learn. (p. 348).

In fact, as people see what is in globalization for them, they try more and more to become a part of the system. Those who react against globalization tend to be those who are either already outside of the system (the poorest of the poor) or those who are afraid that they cannot stay in the system and who fear exclusion from the benefits of globalization. But those who want economic and political power, and who believe that they will gain it, either through hard work or luck, globalization will continue its onward march.

Factors Inhibiting Globalization

There is no shortage of arguments against globalization (e.g., Mander & Goldsmith, 1996). Almost all of the factors that inhibit globalization or create a backlash against it have to do with exploitation of one sort or another--workers, child labor, women, the environment, cultures, and even, some would argue, economic and government systems.

Exploitation of workers can occur in many ways. With corporations free to move their work freely across national boundaries, corporations can freely use the threat of a move to extort conditions from the workers. They can move work to wherever it is the cheapest, or at least where it has the best payoff for the investment. Thus, workers who have committed many years to a company may find themselves out of work overnight. Workers have to work under whatever conditions management insists, because that is how they are able to work. This leads, of course, to such abuses as sweatshops, employment of "illegal" immigrants, and even child labor.

Child labor becomes a concern in the global market place because the laws of many countries either do not prohibit the employment of children, or the laws that exist are not enforced. Corporations may then choose to move their production from the United States to Pakistan, knowing that the labor costs are low because children are involved in the production. This is not an easy issue, however. When I was working in Bangladesh, I was working with a textile mill when the U.S. Congress passed a bill putting very stringent limitations on the import of cheap garments. The mill was closed the next day. Many of the seamstresses in the mill were young girls 12-14. Yet, they provided the rice for their families for the month based on their monthly income. If the choice is between child labor and starvation, which is the worst evil? And their only option for employment without the textile mills was prostitution. Fortunately, Congress realized almost immediately the impact of its actions, and reinstated old quotas for the world's poorest countries.

Women, as a group, may also be exploited in the movement towards globalization. As I travel the world, I find that much of the world gets its information about the United States from television shows, such as "Baywatch" and "Dallas." They see how women are treated in such settings, and they assume that this is the way all U.S. Americans treat women. Sexual harassment and even sexual assault may well occur in the workplace, as a result, especially if the woman is from the U.S. Women in many countries have no recourse to such abuse. Either laws do not exist; or it is so difficult to prove guilt under the evidentiary rules, that the victim has very little chance of gaining redress. And they can't walk off the job because the job is too important to their economic wellbeing.

Many of the arguments against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the more recent ones against the WTO have focused on concerns related to the environment. Companies in the U.S. will move their production to countries (like Mexico) that have far fewer environmental controls, so the argument goes. With fewer environmental controls, production costs will be less, thus increasing profits--but destroying the environment in the process and leaving workers "back home" unemployed. This argument extends to destruction of the rain forest, overmining of natural resources (both mineral and animal), and release of toxins and other pollutants into the air.

Cultural arguments are easy to make. English is becoming the language of business throughout the world. If you don't speak English (and quite well), the opportunities open to you are increasingly fewer. I had a conversation with a person from Kyrgyzstan a few days ago, and he talked about how slow the schools were there to give up the teaching of Russian and replacing it with quality instruction in English. This is a common conversation

throughout the world. Where can you go today and not find McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, Pizza Hut? What city doesn't have Chinese food? Even in staid England the types of restaurants have become extremely diverse, and no one thinks that this is exotic any longer. Television from Sydney with the 2000 Olympics gets beamed around the world. Fashion in one country quickly gets picked up in another country. Ask someone about traditional clothing, and, in many places, you will be looked at as if you were from another century. The reality is that television, especially CNN, the Internet (with its pornography and ready access to different political points of view), cell phones, and videos have all shrunk the world tremendously (Cairncross, 1997). We appear to be moving toward at least having people who are bicultural. Tolbert and McLean (1995) suggested that there was some evidence that we were moving toward a culture of business that transcended individual cultures. Friedman (2000) agreed: "Globalization has its own dominant culture, which is why it tends to be homogenizing to a certain degree" (p. 9). Vogel (1992) observed:

...the increased globalization...is making business practices more uniform. The structure and organization of firms, manufacturing technologies, the social organization of production, customer relations, product development, and marketing--are all becoming increasingly similar. (p. 30)

In the process, some people will view unique cultures of countries as being exploited.

There is far from uniform acceptance of the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) impositions on Korea, Thailand, and Indonesia during the economic crisis of 1997. When we were in Korea, there were handpainted signs posted everywhere (in English!) telling the IMF what these particular Korean people thought of the IMF. Unemployment was experienced in all of these countries such as they have never felt before. And much of it was to protect the foreign banks that had foolishly made very high-risk loans to industries in these countries.

Finally, globalization has exploited government systems. Exploited may be a harsh word here, so perhaps saying that they have dramatically changed government systems is a better way of saying it. Think about the collapse of the Berlin Wall, the demise of communism, the futile efforts of the government of the People's Republic of China to keep information out of the hands of students, only to have them do an end-run with the use of the fax machine. Fundamentalistic Islamic and Christian politicians want to get rid of the Internet because of what can be found there. This past December, I had an opportunity to meet with the President of Costa Rica. He talked about the impact of the WTO's sanction against Export Processing Zones (to disappear by 2003). Because many poorer countries have attracted companies with the use of "tax holidays" in EPZs, the WTO has held that EPZs are a form of subsidy, which is against WTO policy. As a result, Costa Rica, and many countries like it, are trying to figure out how they will be able to attract businesses to provide employment for the workers who will lose their jobs as the companies who moved into the EPZs now move elsewhere.

But there's no turning back the clock. When I was in Saudi Arabia, I attempted to have a threaded discussion, as I always do in the International HRD course. The firewalls that had been erected prevented us from doing this. But I found that, if I created a listserv and we communicated using the "Reply to All" button, we could accomplish exactly the same outcome. We saw young teenage boys accessing porno sites in "Internet cafes" there, and I heard one parent talk about how easy it was for their sons to get access to adult sites. They would swap disks at breaks between classes.

HRD's Role

We are not going to throw away the Internet, our cell phones, video technologies, satellite transmission, new markets, and new opportunities for development. That's why I have concluded, as indicated in the title of this paper, that the march to globalization is inevitable. In fact, as technology continues to develop at increasing speeds, I expect that we will find the pace of globalization to become even faster. If you accept this premise, then it seems that the question for HRD is not, "How can we stop globalization?" but, rather, "How can we support a globalization process that minimizes exploitation and truly works for the wellbeing of all of humanity?"

Before specifying the role of HRD in this process, a definition of HRD may be helpful. McLean and McLean (2000) explored definitions of HRD from around the world. Several differences were found within countries and between countries. The definitions collected varied according to three dimensions: scope of activities included in the definition, intended audience for development, and the intended benefactors of the outcomes of development. Factors influencing the definitions included the country's economy, government and legislative roles, and the influence of other countries through the impact of multinational companies, students studying HRD in other countries, and the predominance of the English literature coming from the United States, the United Kingdom, and, recently, India. The authors provided the following definition as an attempt to begin exploring a global definition:

Human Resource Development is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long-term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction, whether for

personal or group/team gain, or for the benefit of an organisation, community, nation, or, ultimately, the whole of humanity.

This attempt does not, however, negate the ambiguity associated with trying to create a single definition of HRD, especially across multiple cultures (Mankin, in press; McLean, 2000).

Given this definition, then, HRD can support globalization while working to minimize exploitation by:

1. Working to improve educational systems within countries. Given that unskilled and semi-skilled work will continue not to be rewarded, perhaps even at a level of survival, it becomes essential that countries put their efforts into developing high quality education so that students can be prepared for the skilled jobs that will be in demand in the future. This requires that HRD professionals focus on both the training of teachers and administrators, as well as policy makers at local, state, and national levels, as well as using their organization development skills to ensure an environment in which professional educators can work effectively and students can learn effectively.
2. The rapidity of change in the workplace will not abate. This requires that organizations have effective change management programs in place. This is the purview of HRD professionals in Organization Development and might include team building, continuous quality improvement, conflict management, organizational structures, and the need for organizations to be learning organizations.
3. Training is a key to developing skill sets required as work processes change. Haphazard, unstructured OJT (on-the-job training) will no longer suffice. HRD professionals will increasingly address worker literacy. Developing multiple skills among the workforce will also be increasingly important for HRD.
4. Workers at all levels are interacting more with workers from a wide diversity of countries and cultures. To do this work effectively, they need to understand cross-cultural communications and effective ways to work within a multicultural workforce. HRD can provide such expertise.
5. Countries are increasingly focusing their national policies around the implications of globalization (such as is already done in Thailand and Singapore, and just this year, in Korea) (McLean & McLean, 2000). Experts in HRD can assist governments in developing policies that will be expansive and not create reactive barriers that will ultimately hurt the individual, the company, and the government.
6. A person who is well prepared in HRD should also be an expert in understanding systems and systems theory. Presenting the "big picture" and the influence of one activity on the system and its subsystems should help an organization and a country to maximize the benefits of globalization without paying a price that is prohibitive for it. Friedman (2000) reminded us that the world is no longer divided up into "narrow areas of expertise" as "the boundaries between domestic, international, political and technological affairs are all collapsing" (p. 24).
7. Given HRD's values, and OD's in particular, HRD professionals can serve as a conscience to an organization that does not understand the implications of exploitative actions. This does not insure that such activities will not take place, but it does help to know that someone has the ethical task.
8. A much better research base is needed for HRD professionals so they can better determine their role within a globalizing context. As with many fields, HRD has moved toward greater specialization, calling for "unleashing expertise" (Swanson, 1995), calling for greater specialization rather than enhancing the role of HRD in helping business people, government officials, policy makers, and others, become experts in generalizations. We need to know better how to do this.
9. Work with governments and NGOs (non-governments organizations) to create fail-safe systems, retraining programs, protective policies, and anything else that would protect those most vulnerable to exploitation (Wilson, 1987).

Specifically, at the level of business organizations, in an attempt to describe a process for becoming global, McLean, Tolbert, and Myers (2000) developed a model, Creating a Global Learning Organization (GLO), for how companies can move toward globalization through organization development (OD), the application of Action Research. The model outlined "several tenets within which the globally inclusive GLO change process is conducted." These tenets follow:

- Create change buy-in and enrollment at all levels.
- Provide effective leadership modeling and articulation of global vision. Such leaders must be: 1) active coaches and mentors; 2) visionaries; 3) strong and consistent communicators; 4) consistent role models; 5) delegators; and 6) service-oriented individuals.
- Conduct culture audit, qualitative and quantitative, for designing OD interventions.
- Create ownership of OD change interventions at all levels and functions.
- Provide extensive team-building and empowerment opportunities.

- Focus on personal and organizational work at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels.
- Design training and education processes around learner readiness.
- Build accountabilities for globalization into employee and executive performance.
- Link globalization efforts with all other corporate initiatives.
- Provide measurement for progress around OD change efforts.
- Provide challenge and support for all employees.

HRD is in a position to support these steps within businesses moving toward globalization.

In a CEO panel discussion held by *Chief Executive Magazine* and Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International, three important strategies were identified to ensure effective global leadership (Donlon, 1997):

- Organizational consistency--adopt the same thinking and procedures on a worldwide basis in order to obtain scales of economy.
- Human resource capability--have the right people in the right place to compete globally
- Customer-oriented organizational flexibility--cut across traditional corporate hierarchies and establish self-managed teams to serve customers' global requirements.

Most participants agreed that the best long-term approach is to nurture an adaptive transnational culture so managers can understand the global strategic intent of the organization and its products. One way of doing this is to have more foreign executives in top management participating in business decision-making.

Companies face many challenges in achieving their goals. The traditional way of doing business must be challenged. Global managers need to reframe the 1) boundaries of space, time, scope, structure, geography, and function; 2) boundaries of functional, professional, and technical skills relevant for a past age; 3) boundaries of thinking and classification of rational versus intuitive, national versus foreign, we versus they; 4) boundaries of cultural assumptions, values and beliefs about the world, relations with others, and understanding of self (Rhinesmith, 1996). Other challenges to doing business across borders include developing the needed organization culture and managerial talents. "Corporate culture encompasses the values, norms of behaviors, systems, policies, and procedures through which an organization adapts to the complexity of the global arena" (Rhinesmith, 1996, p. 15). Companies need a common vision and value system to guide decentralized management, so that it can be fast and agile in learning and responding to new development around the world.

As to global managerial talents, there is growing consensus as to the value of employees with cross-cultural skills and teamwork among employees with diverse cultural backgrounds and demographic characteristics (Jain & Verma, 1996). Conn and Yip (1997) found that human resource practices are key in enhancing transfer abilities. A 20% increase in the effectiveness of such practices as global compensation systems, managers' foreign rotation programs, and worldwide training systems may cause a 3-5 % increase in effectiveness of critical capabilities transfer.

Human resources are often among the first to contact new foreign partners (Laabs, 1996). They assess the potential work force in a new country; decipher international labor laws; educate the organization on foreign markets, cultures, and ways of doing business; and create higher standards to select, train, and motivate international talents. Human capital is the source of sustainable competitive advantage to an organization, and its quality may be the only thing to distinguish one company from another in terms of globalization (Laabs, 1996). As a shaper of strategy (Torraco & Swanson, 1995) and as a change agent, HRM or HRD is responsible for nurturing a global corporate culture to increase organizational ability to learn through training and organization design.

The adoption of six new mindsets may help HR people meet demands from global organizations (Rhinesmith, 1995). The first mindset involves gathering information on the latest trends in learning, related technology, training methods, team building, and organization development on a global basis to improve the competitive edge. The second mindset requires the ability to identify, analyze, and manage paradoxes and confrontations due to contradictory needs in a complex global world. The third is viewing the organization as a process rather than as a structure to which value is added to drive the business. The fourth mindset requires the ability to work with people of different functional skills, experience levels, and cultural backgrounds. The fifth is the ability to manage continuous change and uncertainty effectively and efficiently. The last mindset is seeking lifelong learning and being able to manage organizational learning and improvement through exploration of new knowledge, new cultural perspectives, and feedback from a wide range of sources. These six mindsets remind HR professionals that there is much to learn before HR can help organizations succeed in globalization.

McLean and Mai (1999) concluded that

Increasing interdependence among different parts of the world means that globalization will become a way of doing business for most companies. Taking a proactive approach toward globalization may provide the competitive advantage needed to be successful. Mapping out a perfect strategy to compete globally may be

important to survive, but generating a global mindset for an organization as a whole is far more powerful. Globalization requires continuous organizational learning to discover resources, opportunities, and technologies; opening one's mind to differences around the world; foreseeing potential challenges; and thinking globally for the impact of strategic decisions. (p. 339)

An editorial in *Business Week* ("How to Keep...", 1992) called for a strong training role:

What is to be done? Invest heavily in worker training and education, the one proven pathway to higher productivity and the production of high-value-added goods and services....Only a well-trained and educated work force can embrace the kinds of total quality management, just-in-time inventory control, computerized manufacturing, teamwork systems, and other techniques so crucial to producing the goods that generate First World-level profits and salaries. (p. 80)

The ultimate goal for a company may be transforming the organization from an ethnocentric model to a geocentric business model (Heenan & Perlmutter, 1979). To achieve that, people's values and expertise in globalization are the key. And human resource professionals must be the catalysts for the process by enhancing the organization's capacity to manage at least three levels of globalization--strategy/structure, corporate culture, and people (Rhinesmith, 1996).

Recommendations for Research

In many respects, HRD has not been particularly active in research related to international contexts. So it is not surprising that little has been researched or written by those traditionally seen as coming from inside the field of HRD. Some of the questions that HRD could address include:

1. How effectively does HRD address issues related to globalization as experienced by individual employees? Businesses? Communities? Government agencies?
2. What are the values of the field of HRD (and its professionals) and how do they support or hinder HRD professionals from helping to overcome the factors of exploitation that are potentially present in globalization?
3. What approaches are most effective for raising literacy, to provide skills to the unskilled, to develop learning skills, and to develop multiple skills?
4. What organization development interventions are most effective in helping business people and government officials to understand and apply systems thinking, to accept diversity, to manage conflict in a positive way, to work together as teams, to support each other in a coaching environment, etc.? In short, how do we empower individuals to benefit from globalization?
5. How can HRD help develop a comfort with ambiguity and willingness to adapt among people who are traditionally rigid?
6. How can technology illiteracy be addressed, especially among people who grew up in an environment where technology was not present and where people may even have a phobia about the technology?
7. Is a homogeneous culture emerging across traditional cultures? If so, among whom? Do those people view this as positive or negative? If negative, what is needed for traditional and emerging cultures to co-exist?
8. Within various cultures and constraints, what can be done to improve education and keep children in school longer and have better outcomes? Few in HRD have focused on school systems. Forming partnerships with those doing traditional educational research could well strengthen both fields.

There are many, many other questions that could be addressed profitably by HRD researchers. What is first needed is for HRD to affirm its commitment to working within a global context and working to create a humane approach to globalization that will open opportunities for those who have traditionally been exploited. With that mindset, we will see much more effort allocated to research related to globalization by HRD researchers.

Conclusion

I can think of no better way to end this paper than to share a story from Friedman (2000):

High-tech entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley always like to compare their supercompetitive business to the story about the lion and the gazelle in the jungle. Every night the lion goes to sleep in the jungle knowing that in the morning, when the sun comes up, if it can't outrun the slowest gazelle, it will go hungry. Every night the gazelle goes to sleep in the jungle knowing that in the morning, when the sun comes up, if it can't outrun the fastest lion, it's going to be somebody's breakfast. But the one thing that the lion and the gazelle both know when they go to sleep is that in the morning, when the sun comes up, they had better start running. (p. 331)

And so it is with globalization.

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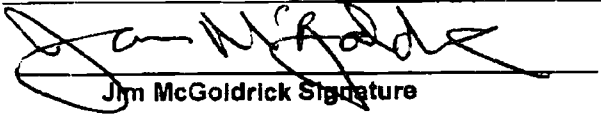
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